COLOMBIA EXPERIENCE

TRAINING
MULTIPLIERS
TO PROMOTE
POSITIVE
CHILD RAISING

SYSTEMATISATION OF AN EXPERIENCE

AND END
HUMILIATING,
DEGRADING
AND CORPORAL
PUNISHMENT

FPAA
Fondo para la Acción
Ambiental y la Niñez
COLOMBIA

ALCALDÍA MAYOR
DE BOGOTÁ D.C.
Departamento Administrativo
BIENESTAR SOCIAL

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INTRODUCTION

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2005 and May 2006, a project to train multipliers to work with parent was held in Colombia, which encompassed 45 groups in nine cities and municipalities of the country. For eight months, workshops helped to promote positive child raising and to stop humiliating, degrading and corporal punishment.

In 2004, Save the Children UK Bogota published a manual in Spanish to assist educators to work with parents on this topic Descubriendo la Crianza positiva. Sin golpes ni gritos (Discovering Positive Parenting. Without Hitting or Yelling), following which a project to train multipliers was piloted. It was then thought desirable to develop training on the use of the manual, employing a model with specific methodological principles. These would assist educators to bring about changes related to punishment and positive child raising, as well as to strengthen their skills as educators of parents, concerning an issue that is very difficult to transform because the use of corporal punishment is culturally accepted.

This document organises and presents the experience in the hope that it can help to build knowledge on corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading forms of punishment, and also on the training model that the project used. Quantitative information was collected by administering surveys to the participants at the beginning and end of the project; qualitative data was also collected from the records of each of the workshops held with the educators. ▌

THE RESEARCH ISSUE

1.1. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND HUMILIATING AND DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS

VIOLENCE IS DIRECTED against children in all Latin American countries. Forms of violence include child abuse, sexual abuse, and exploitative labour, among others. Another way of exerting violence against children within the family is the use of corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading methods of punishment.

These types of punishment are socially and legally accepted forms of violence against boys and girls that violate their fundamental right to physical integrity and human dignity, according to the International Save the Children Alliance (2004). They are actions in which some form of physical or psychological violence, causing pain and/or bodily or psychological harm is used with the intention of punishing a child, in the belief that such violence is educational or corrects an undesirable conduct.

Corporal punishment takes many forms. Some of these include: "striking the boy or girl with the hand or an object (stick, belt, whip, shoe, etc.); kicking, shaking, or knocking the child down; pinching them or pulling their hair; forcing them to hold uncomfortable or unseemly positions, making them do excessive physical exercise; burning or scarring the child (2004). Humiliating and degrading punishment[1] shows a similar variety of approaches, including psychological punishment, insults, ridiculing, isolating or ignoring the boy or girl." (2004).

There are many difficulties entailed with the quantification of violence against children; as a

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[1] Here we use the term humiliating and degrading punishment because it is used in the environment of the Save the Children Alliance to which the Colombian programme of Save the Children UK belongs.

result, the comprehensiveness, quality, reliability and, therefore, the utility of information varies from country to country, department to department, and even among municipalities in a single country. In addition, since definitions are not uniform, and in many cases are inadequate, the data collected can mask central aspects of the problem and hinder comparative analysis of countries or regions. This is aggravated in the case of corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments because these are part of the culture and rendered invisible insofar as people see them as inherently natural.

It is important to take into account that often adults use corporal punishment because the patterns of childrearing they experienced included this strategy as an educational measure. The use of corporal punishment reflects deeply rooted cultural values and beliefs that are first learned from the child's earliest socialisation, that is patterns learned in early childhood in the family setting.[2] Their transformation must, therefore, use reflection on the educational role of parents and on the different ways of exercising this role, respecting the child's humanity and development. The majority of fathers and mothers do not intend to hurt or harm their children. To the contrary, they are trying to make them better people, not knowing the effects that the blows have on children. If the parents were better informed and had alternative ways of disciplining, they would certainly resort less to corporal punishment and could even abolish it. Therefore, it is important to create the means to help parents to raise their children without the need for hitting, yelling, or humiliation.

1.2. THE SAVE THE CHILDREN PROJECT

1.2.1. THE MANUAL DISCOVERING POSITIVE PARENTING, WITHOUT HITTING OR YELLING: A TRAINING MODEL FOR PARENTS

As an outcome of its focus on corporal punishment, Save the Children UK's Colombia programme developed a manual[3] on parenting and childrearing so that institutional caregivers can work to educate fathers and mothers on positive parenting (Isaza, 2004). It is a simple manual to apply that can be used by early childhood educators, primary school teachers or Colombian Family Welfare Institute (ICBF) daycare workers.

The manual was put together on the assumption that strengthening parents' ability to deal with the issues addressed in the workshops would encourage good treatment and lessen the use of hitting, yelling, and humiliation to punish children.

The manual presents *six workshops* that develop this basic proposition:

* **Remembering our childhood:** This workshop encourages the parents to reflect on their mem-

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[2] The secretariat of the Colombian Catholic Church's Social Ministry Division did a study on child mistreatment and found that punishment associated with mistreatment is based on cultural myths and is considered one of the most effective ways of educating children. See Fanny Uribe Idárraga, et al. 1999.
[3] Hereafter referred to as the manual.

ories of the punishments they received as children and the memories that they want their sons and daughters to have.

✳ **Are beating and hitting justified?:** The objective of this workshop is for parents to reflect on violent punishments that they use with their children and to think about whether these can be justified, or whether by using an affectionate disciplinary approach they could achieve the same result they get by hitting their children and yelling at them.

✳ **They suffer and we suffer with corporal punishment:** The feelings of adults and children when we resort to hitting, yelling, humiliation, and threats, are the subject of this workshop. It tries to help parents understand that both they and their children would feel better if they used other child raising practices.

✳ **How to maintain discipline in the home:** The workshop tries to help the parents understand rules, their importance, and the most appropriate way to establish these in the home in order to co-exist and to help children to develop well.

✳ **Disciplining without pain:** Although the previous workshops have proposed alternatives that do not hurt, this workshop tries to go deeper into the characteristics of these disciplinary alternatives.

✳ **How can we communicate better with our children?:** This workshop gives parents important tips about how to improve communication with children, and about some ways to express affection and positive recognition.

The methodology proposed in the workshops uses several *methodological principles* that try to foment change by the participants:

✳ **Participation:** The goal is the active participation of those who attend the sessions through the workgroups, plenary sessions, experience-sharing activities, and other techniques employed.

✳ **Reflection:** The workshops do not seek to inform or convince the participants; they try to stimulate reflection on experiences, cases, and information applied to their situation, and so forth.

✳ **They begin rom the standpoint and experiences of participants:** The assumption is that any change must begin from experience, shared analysis, and reflection. It is important to provide people with the opportunity to think about childhood and contemporary experiences because these allow them to more easily understand the situation and to make changes. Sharing experience also facilitates learning together.

✳ **Being appreciative:** This refers to the attitude of trying to understand the participants' experiences in a positive manner, without judging them, and strengthening a positive approach.

✳ **Being constructive:** Since the workshop actions cannot remain at the level of reflection, it is necessary for each participant, and the group as a whole, with the support of the workshop facilitator, to build and propose viable alternatives to modify the aspects that need modification or strengthen the positive aspects, as well as making personal commitments to change.

✳ **Maintain the confidentiality of the information divulged by the participants:** In the sessions the parents share opinions and intimate experiences, thus what is expressed in the workshop must not leave the room. This principle applies to the leader as well as to the other participants.

✳ **Adapt the approach to the participants' circumstances**

1.2.2. TRAINING EDUCATORS TO WORK WITH PARENTS ON THIS SUBJECT

It was necessary to consider training educators to use the manual properly, since corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments can be part of daily life for people who may sincerely want to use the manual but who may transmit ambivalent messages with respect to the issue of eliminating such punishment. The manual uses a methodology that needs to be learned, because work with parents often uses a less interactive approach, such as presentations.
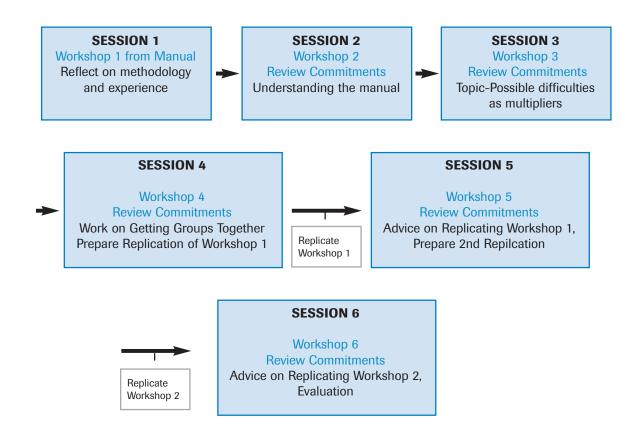
It was therefore considered necessary to pilot an experiment in training in 2004, which gave rise to a lecture series and learning that made it possible to create a model of *educator training*. This was put into practice between mid-2005 and mid-2006 in nine Colombian municipalities. *The objective of this project is to summarise and synthesise the learning from that experience*[4]. In this new proposal, a series of *principles to guide the training of multipliers* is laid out explicitly:

✴ **The training of educators must follow the same methodological principles outlined in the manual.** That is to say, it must be reflexive, participatory, constructive, positive, begin from the experience of the participants, and be adapted to their circumstances. These characteristics describe a constructivist interactive approach to learning that conceives of people as active participants in the generation and appropriation of knowledge.

✴ **Educators must experience the manual's six workshops as parents or caregivers.** Two reasons underlie this principle: one, through the workshops in the manual, educators address the issue of corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading treatment and can make changes in their lives and opinions. Two, having experienced the workshops helps to serve as a model when they replicate them with parents.

✴ **Educators need tools to handle difficulties that could arise in doing workshops with parents.**

✴ **Educators must know the manual to understand its structure and content.**

✴ **Educators need to begin by experiencing the manual's workshops during the training period** so that this experience becomes a learning tool and so that members of the training team can support them. It is "learning by doing."

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[4] This experience was implemented by the Save the Children UK Colombia Programme through agreements with the Fund for Environmental Action and Children and the Administrative Department of Social Welfare (DABS) of the Capital District, Bogota. In addition formal agreements were implemented with the municipalities of Tenjo (Cundinamarca) and Quimbaya (Quindío). Informal agreements were made with the Good Start Programme in Medellin's education department, with the municipalities of Villavicencio (Meta), Envigado (Antioquia), and Montenegro (Quindío), and with Plan International in Cartagena, as well as the CRAN Foundation in Bogota, and the Children and Development Corporation and the San Rafael Clinic in Soacha (Cundinamarca).

The objectives and the sequence of training activities are laid out based on the principles outlined above. The objectives are twofold: some refer to consciousness-raising and changes in practices with respect to corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishment, and others concern training the participants as educators. The training actions were carried out through six sessions as shown in the first diagram.

DIAGRAM NO. 1: TRAINING ACTIONS FOR GROUPS OF EDUCATORS

SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3
Workshop 1 from Manual	Workshop 2	Workshop 3
Reflect on methodology and experience	Review Commitments Understanding the manual	Review Commitments Topic-Possible difficulties as multipliers

SESSION 4		SESSION 5
Workshop 4 Review Commitments Work on Getting Groups Together Prepare Replication of Workshop 1	Replicate Workshop 1	Workshop 5 Review Commitments Advice on Replicating Workshop 1, Prepare 2nd Repilcation

	SESSION 6
Replicate Workshop 2	Workshop 6 Review Commitments Advice on Replicating Workshop 2, Evaluation

1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

There are many programmes and projects that address the issue of stopping violence against children and physical and psychological mistreatment, but it is necessary to produce knowledge about these by means of evaluation and research projects. This is why we decided to undertake a thorough systematisation of the experience, focussing on three basic aspects:

∗ Description and understanding of the experiences, the beliefs, and the practices related to the subject of corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, and on positive child raising practices. The intention is to contribute knowledge that complements what has been gradually accu-

mulated in this country on the subject. We refer to understanding because, as well as a description of the situations, we seek to grasp their significance for the participants' real life current day experiences, those that they experienced as children, and as adults raising their own children or educating others.

✳   Identification and understanding of the changes that the educators implemented with the children in their care, either because they have children under 18, or because they work with children in schools or daycare centres. These changes are related to a shift in beliefs and practices, away from violently punishing children and toward positive child raising.

✳   Identification and understanding of the educators' learning process in their role as parent trainers. This aspect includes a description of the process followed, in order to identify the progress, achievements, and difficulties, so as to be able to reflect on the strengthens and weaknesses of the model and its principles for providing training to adults on a sensitive and culturally deep-rooted subject like the violent punishment of children.

1.4. OBJECTIVES

1   Identify and understand the educators' beliefs and experiences on corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments.
2   Identify and understand the practices that the educators use concerning corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, and positive child raising.
3   Identify and understand the changes that the educators made in their role as institutional or family caregivers in charge of children, with respect to corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, and the use of positive child raising strategies, as the result of having participated in the training.
4   Identify and understand the educators' learning process in their role as parent trainers on the subject of corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments.
5   Validate the methodological model used for training educators.
6   Make recommendations on projects for training educators and parents on the subject of child raising without corporal punishment and without humiliating and degrading punishments. ▌

METHODOLOGY

2. 1. TYPE OF RESEARCH

THE APPROACH USED is one that since the 1970s has been described as systematisation of experiences, because it was felt that many of the characteristics of this project were similar to those efforts. Francke and Morgan wrote in 1995, systematisation is the process that makes it possible to transform the "experience" into organised, substantiated knowledge that may be communicated to others. To do so, as with any other thorough endeavour for the production of knowledge, requires working with a methodology.

It turn, Palma (1992), cited by Francke and Morgan, (1995), writes that the proposals on systematisation that are in use in Latin America today have a common theoretical-epistemological deduction: the concept that social practices are a source of knowledge when they are related to theory in dialogue or dialectic. They also share a fundamental objective: to understand the real life experience of participating in an intervention that deliberately seeks to bring about social change, with the purpose of learning from this experience and transmitting this learning to others.

As such, this experience, organised, reflected upon, and compared with real life experience, becomes a source of knowledge that subsequently helps have impact on the reality of corporal punishment and positive child raising, with greater significance and effectiveness.

2.2. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE EXPERIENCE: THE EDUCATORS

The project was hosted in nine municipalities in Colombia, with 45 groups of approximately 25 people each, distributed as follows:

TABLE NO. 1: NUMBER OF GROUPS TRAINED PER MUNICIPALITY

MUNICIPALITY	Number of groups	Number of people who attended 4 or more sessions
Bogota[5]	28	635
Medellín	2	58
Envigado	2	26
Cartagena	4	95
Villavicencio	2	62
Tenjo	1	23
Soacha	2	25
Quimbaya	2	35
Montenegro	2	38
TOTAL	**45**	**997**

In each municipality, the participants were invited, taking into account that these are people who would have the opportunity to replicate the workshops from the manual with parents, as part of their work. Among those who attended were early childhood educators, ICBF community daycare workers, municipal health-care promoters, teachers, and a few other social sciences and healthcare professionals.

A *socio-demographic breakdown* of the educators, obtained from the information given by the people who filled out the initial survey, which is detailed in the next section, revealed the following:

Of 1,019 people, 666 had children under 18, and 353 either did not have children or else had children over 18. Most of the participants were women. Most of the people in both groups had completed high school

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[5]   In Bogota, there were five more groups that have not been included in this systematisation. With four of them, the objective was only to raise consciousness about the subject of punishment. The fifth group had already received training in 2004 and it followed a different process. Of the 28 groups, 27 were affiliated with the DABS (Administrative Department of Social Welfare) Child Development Centres, and one with the CRAN Foundation.

or beyond, with those in the group without children having a slightly higher education level. The family groups included nuclear families, single-parent families, and extended families (with three generations under one roof). They work with children of different ages, and over half do work with the parents.

2.3. INFORMATION COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Two techniques were used to collect information in the project:

✳ **Initial and final surveys:** Two parallel surveys were designed, one to be applied before the training and the other to apply at the end of the training. Both surveys evaluated: opinions about corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, self-perception about punishment practices, and self-perception about positive child raising practices. The initial survey also included questions about childhood experiences of punishment and expectations concerning the training. The final survey included questions about the perception of what was gained from the training and about the changes that it was felt had been made concerning the punishment of children.

✳ **Record of the workshops hosted with the groups:** Each of the workshops that was done was observed, recording as faithfully as possible how it unfolded and the interventions by the people. This sought to substantiate a qualitative understanding of the participants' experience and their attitudes on punishment and child-raising practices, as well as the changes that could be observed during the process. ▌

THE FINDINGS

3.1. BELIEFS AMD OPINIONS ABOUT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND ABOUT HUMILIATING AND DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS

COMPARING THE DATA found in the initial and final surveys makes it apparent that desirable changes took place in the opinions about corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, with the greatest changes coming from those who have children under 18. The educators who do not have children appear to change less in their opinions. The hypothesis could be put forth that those who are not raising children do not feel that the subject is significant for their personal life and, as such, there is less likelihood that they change would their opinion, whereas those who are raising children began to implement changes in their practices and their feelings, which leads to a greater shift against these punishments.

As reflection took place on the punishment practices, their effects, and their lack of relevance to the objectives that are sought when using these punishments, greater awareness became apparent on the importance of eliminating violent punishment and the need to find alternatives that make amends and educate in child raising. During the six workshops that were given, beliefs were identified about corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, as well as some beliefs about child raising practices different from hitting, yelling, and humiliation. These beliefs are described below.

3.1.1. BELIEFS THAT UPHOLD CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND HUMILIATING AND DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS

First of all, it is important to highlight that *these kinds of beliefs were expressed more frequently during the earlier workshops than during the later ones, which indicates a shift.* At the start of

the training process, it was found that the beliefs used to justify corporal punishment gave reasons such as:

- **PUNISHMENT IS NORMAL:** The arguments appeared to come from a concept that punishment is a natural condition, in its origins, as a historical family habit, and by religious mandate.

  * **Children need and are grateful for punishments,** as if they were responsible for the adult's violent behaviour: *It is necessary to use these punishments because the children ask for them. You warn them and they don't get it. So you have to use the belt. There comes a day when they want you to hit them.* (Workshop 1 Envigado). The beliefs that derive from the adult's early socialisation reflect that, as they are grateful for having been hit, yelled at, and humiliated, the children will thank them in the same way: *The question is very difficult. I'll give you an example. There were eight of us at home and one of us would steal electric wires. My father gave him gave him a hell of a beating and nowadays he says that if he had not been disciplined, he does not know where he would have ended up.* (Workshop 2 Montenegro)

  * **Violent punishment educates,** regardless of the fact that the punishment is not related to the lesson being taught or that the objective is to change a simple behaviour. Within this concept falls the notion of a being slapped into shape as a way of nipping a problem in the bud.

  * **Violent punishments are used because there is no other choice,** either because one does not know about these or because they have not worked. Uncertainty about discipline that does not involve hitting, yelling, or humiliating, seems to be based on the adult's doubts that the expected results will be achieved, which is related to control over the child or a fear that it might be thought that the adult has gone soft.

  * **Violent punishments work because they cause pain:** *A punishment is something that hurts. If the person does not suffer, then it is no good.* (Workshop 3 Bogota)

  * **Violent punishment serves to establish authority:** The meaning of authority is associated with being in possession of the truth and power; having control over the child, and raising him or her to be submissive; dictating what shall or shall not be done about the child, without taking into account the child's opinion; believing that the child only respects the adult for being bigger: *Respect is obedience. It does not matter if it comes from fear. What is important is to impose authority so that the children don't get the upper hand. It does not matter how you do it, but you have to show that Mama is in charge.* (Workshop 2 Quimbaya)

It is believed that discipline that does not hurt does not work, because the parents become permissive and the children become rebellious, take advantage, and are spoilt.

3.1.2. BELIEFS THAT FAVOUR POSITIVE CHILD RAISING STRATEGIES, RATHER THAN CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND HUMILIATING AND DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS

From the first workshop, there were some comments that expressed resounding opposition to violent punishments. However, it was as of workshop five that more comments were heard concerning reasons and reflections about why these kinds of punishments should not be used in child raising, even in regions where the belief in support of these punishments was strong. Also, as of workshop three it was noticed that there were more reflections concerning child raising without hitting, yelling, and humiliation.

The reasons against corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments reflected the following:

✳ **Corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishment engender violence.** *This country is tired of so much violence. What could I teach anyone by hitting? There is violence; I think the way should be through dialogue.* (Workshop 1 Medell n)

✳ **Violent punishment leaves its mark on children:** This idea comes from reflecting on things that took place in one's childhood and marked one for life. The inner mark left by being punished with hitting, yelling, and humiliation is closely related to feelings of resentment, anger, rebelliousness, and fear, and these furthermore have a psychological impact on the person's life, which is evident in their behaviours, because it creates people who are submissive, have low self-esteem, and accept mistreatment.

✳ **Positive practices are conducive to children's moral and emotional development:** It was noticed that to the degree that positive child raising practices were applied, the children were more open to learning to evaluate their actions and the consequences, and they show less fear and rejection, and both adults and children exhibited less rage. The result was an increase in affection and harmonious relations, thus solving the problem. Furthermore, the children acquired the ability to make repairs for harm done, and to ask forgiveness: *When children are treated with respect, they are more able to make commitments and they don't feel so guilty; they are able to ask for forgiveness, thus creating an opportunity to make amends.* (Workshop 3 Tenjo).

Positive impact was also seen in developing a self-image, self-esteem, and achieving greater autonomy and moral development: *The children control themselves.* (Workshop 3 Bogota)

✳ **Positive child raising brings about more opportunities for reflection and dialogue:** It may be said that when the adult reflects more and does not hit, more opportunities are created to have an impact on both the children and the adults.

Nonetheless, some people remained uncertain or doubtful about the results and others felt outside pressure to administer a punishment involving hitting, yelling and humiliation: *There is uncertainty when*

one does not punish. As if you were not doing anything. *Talking is not enough. I already talked to her and made my point but my neighbour said, you should have smacked her. I say that you can talk without hitting.* (Workshop 3 Villavicencio)

✻ **Discipline that does not hurt enables the exercise of authority with wisdom:** From the start, alternative stances were observed concerning the role of the adult and authority, and these were stressed and validated throughout the workshops in analysing the meaning of positive child raising: *You get authority when you put yourself in another's shoes. One needs to remember that one wasn't born big. One needs to understand their needs, how they feel. Child raising is something that you learn every day, knowing that they get back at you when you hit and yell at them.* (Workshop 1 Cartagena)

✻ **To discipline it is necessary to set limits rather than punishing violently:** From the first workshop, the importance of rules as an alternative to hitting and yelling was mentioned, because these provide clarity and a healthy environment for coexistence.

3.1.3. BELIEFS ABOUT FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE USE OF PUNISHMENTS

The beliefs about why parents use corporal punishment, and humiliating and degrading punishments, are grouped into three factors:

✻ **Socio-economic factors:** It is thought that problems related to the person's social and economic situation create tension and lead to violent actions toward the children, as a way that parents who are stressed take out their frustrations.

✻ **Factors associated with the adult's ignorance:** It is believed that punishing by hitting, yelling and humiliating takes place because of the parents' ignorance: a lack of education; not knowing how to parent; not knowing the right way to educate without hitting or yelling; ignorance of the painful memories, hate, and rancour that are created when people are disciplined violently; a lack of affective resources for child raising.

✻ **Generational factors:** It is also believed that each person's personal background affects how they raise their children, either because they are repeating the patterns they experienced as children or else because they are avoiding making the same mistakes that their parents and grandparents made in child raising

3.2. PUNISHMENT PRACTICES YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Although it was not possible to compare all of the aspects of punishments administered during childhood and those that the workshops' participants currently use, some relations were established concerning elements that have remained constant and those that have changed over the years.

3.2.1. TYPE OF PUNISHMENTS

Both in former times, as well as nowadays, various kinds of hitting, and humiliating and degrading punishments are used. However, it appears that nowadays their intensity is less. In terms of corporal punishment, formerly hitting with an object, particularity a belt, was common, whereas now hitting with the hand, particularly spanking predominates. In terms of humiliating and degrading punishments, in the past insults and humiliation were used, whereas nowadays yelling is more common, although this was used in former times too. Two hypotheses arise for these observations: that the participants feel that they were punished more harshly than what they do to the children now, and that it is easier to accept harsh punishments that were received when one was a child than those that they feel able to administer, and that is why nowadays the punishments appear to be less harsh.

It is also important to note that although violent punishments are still in use, nowadays it seems that there is increased use of dialogue as a means of discipline that does not hurt and that endeavours to get the child to change his behaviour.

3.2.2. REASONS FOR PUNISHMENTS

This is perhaps the area that has changed the least between former times and the present: disobedience, childish behaviour, school performance, and hurting others, are the children's behaviours that give rise to disciplining (with violent punishments and non-violent discipline). It would seem that the urge to control children and mould them to the adults' expectations, inclusive in disregard for the normal stages of child development, is the constant that gives rise to punishments both yesterday and today. At the heart of the matter, it could be suggested that the adult believes him or herself to have power and control over the child, denying that the child is an active subject with the right to make mistakes. It also appears that the adults blame the children for their punishments, denying their own responsibility and their own feelings as being the elements that give rise to the punishment that the child receives.

3.2.3.   OBJECTIVE OF PUNISHING

In the past, this point was never questioned. Nowadays control and reflection are specified as the objectives sought through disciplining. It is interesting to note that reflection is the explicit motivation for disciplining, whereas the desire to control the child appears to be implicit, in that the participants do not acknowledge this reason.

3.2.4.   WHO ADMINISTERS PUNISHMENTS

This information came exclusively from the recounting of childhood experiences, revealing that the person who administered it made no difference to the kind of punishment that was used. Corporal punishment was the most often used and all of the people who punish mentioned these. The punishment of having something taken away was mentioned less, and this was only administered by the father or mother.
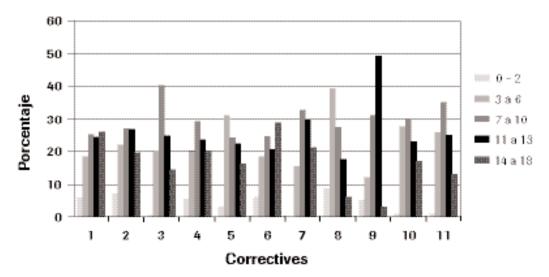
Memories of punishments by the father and mother indicate that they both used the same kinds of punishments. Receiving punishments by aunts and uncles or siblings was also mentioned, but much less frequently. Others who administered punishments were grandparents, stepparents, bosses, neighbours, a caregiver, and cousins.

3.2.5.   GENDER AND AGE OF THE CHILD PUNISHED

This information was only collected for the present day situation. The people who do not have children under 18, and who work with children, were administering punishments to the children that they work with, aged 3 to 6.

In contrast, the answers from the people who have children under 18 reveal certain tendencies depending on the age of the children being punished, as shown in diagram 2. These data come from the initial survey and they refer to the 11 most frequently used ways of disciplining (violent and non-violent). It may be observed that younger children and adolescents 14 to 18, are punished less. The intermediate ages are the object of more discipline, with spanking being frequent for ages 3 to 6, not being allowed to watch television for ages 7 to 10, and not being allow to go on a trip or to a party for ages 11 to 13.

DIAGRAM NO. 2. AGE OF CHILD PUNISHED WITH MOST COMMON PUNISHMENTS - THOSE WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18

1. Talking to the child
2. Explaining what was wrong
3. Not allowing television (or withholding a privilege for those without children)
4. Yelling
5. Making the child fix or pay for damage
6. Indifference
7. Not being allowed to go out
8. Spanking
9. Not being allowed to go on a trip or to a party
10. Taking away a favourite toy or possession
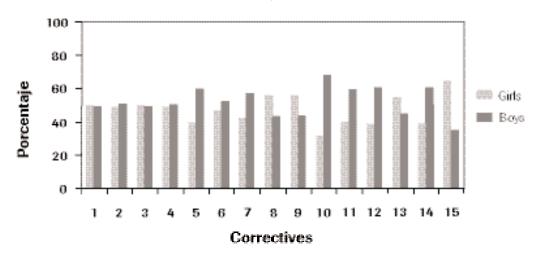11. Not being allowed to play with friends or to go out for recess

In terms of the most frequently corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, spankings are used mostly with small children and their frequency diminishes as the child grows; yelling is used mostly with children over 7 and also diminishes as they grow. In contrast, indifference is used with children 7 to 10 and adolescents. Dialogue is used with children of all ages except for the youngest ones.

There are some interesting features about other, less used, punishments (that do not appear on the diagram): isolating the child for a short while was mostly used with the age group 0 to 2 and 7 to 10; refusing to give the child money increases with age and is used mostly with adolescents; shaking is used with children 3 to 10; children under 7 are not insulted and children under 11 are not humiliated; children over 10 are not told that they are not loved.

Diagrams No. 3 and No. 4 refer to the *gender* of the child being punished, with the data on most frequent punishments administered prior to the training. A marked tendency may be observed among those *who do not have children under 18,* to punish boys more often than girls. In contrast, those with children under 18 show differences in terms of the kind of punishment administered: *Talking, explaining, not allowing television,*

and yelling are equally applied to both sexes; boys are more often made to fix the damage that was done, their toys are *withheld, they are not allowed to play with their friends,* they are not given money, and they are hit with a belt; girls are spanked more, not allowed to go on trips or to parties, given more housework, and shaken.
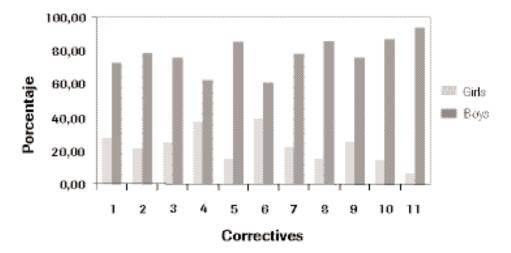
DIAGRAM NO. 3. GENDER OF THE CHILD PUNISHED BY THE PARENTS - INITIAL SURVEY, THOSE WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18 (PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFIED THE GENDER OF THE CHILD BEING PUNISHED)

1. Talking to the child
2. Explaining what was wrong
3. Not allowing television
4. Yelling
5. Making the child fix or pay for damage
6. Indifference
7. Not being allowed to go out
8. Spanking

9. Not being allowed to go on a trip or to a party
10. Taking away a favourite toy or possession
11. Not being allowed to play with friend.
12. Not being given money
13. More housework or homework
14. Hit with a belt
15. Shaking

DIAGRAM NO. 4. GENDER OF THE CHILD BEING PUNISHED BY PEOPLE WITHOUT CHILDREN UNDER 18 - INITIAL SURVEY (PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFIED THE GENDER OF THE CHILD BEING PUNISHED)

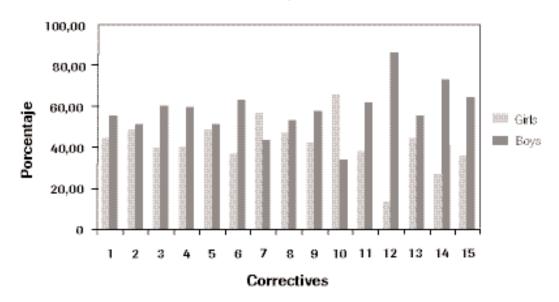1. Talking to the child
2. Explaining what was wrong
3. Withholding a privilege (those without children)
4. Yelling
5. Making the child fix or pay for damage
6. Indifference
7. Spanking
8. Taking away a possession
9. Not being allowed to go out for recess
10. More homework
11. Shaking

This information suggests the hypothesis that the adults working in education centres have more difficulties managing the children. Seeing as most of the participants were women, there could be some difficulties understanding the behaviour of male children. In terms of the family, it was noteworthy that spanking and shaking were used more with girls, *whereas hitting with a belt was more common for boys.* It could be thought that the notion of female delicateness also applies to children and that is why girls are hit less with a belt. In contrast, the girls are given more housework, which is traditionally considered women's work. In terms of privileges being withheld, boys are not allowed to play and girls are not allowed to go out, which might also be influenced by cultural ideas about gender roles.

The information about the gender of the child being punished at the end of the training reveals that the people who do not have children under 18 continue to punish boys more than girls. The data from people with children under 18 appears in diagram No. 5, and shows that more disciplinary measures are directed at boys than girls, which was not the case prior to the training. Only not being allowed to go out and being given more housework applies more to girls. This could indicate that a reduction in punishment is influenced limiting the kinds of punishments used, particularly concerning girls, more so than boys.

GENDER OF THE CHILD PUNISHED BY THE PARENTS -
FINAL SURVEY, THOSE WITH CHILDREN UNDER 18
(PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFIED THE GENDER OF THE CHILD
BEING PUNISHED)

1. Talking and coming to agreements
2. Explaining what was wrong
3. Not allowing television
4. Yelling
5. Making the child fix or pay for damage
6. Not being allowed to go out
7. Indifference
8. Spanking
9. Not being allowed to play with friends or allowed to go out for recess
10. Not being allowed to go on a trip or to a party
11. No being given money
12. Taking away a favourite toy or possession
13. Hitting with a belt
14. More housework or homework
15. Being given a "time-out"

3.2.6. FEELINGS ABOUT PUNISHMENTS

Violent punishments bring memories of feelings of being disregarded, rage, sadness, and fear. Currently the latter three may be observed in the children being punished, with disregard for their feelings, which is something that the adults seldom admit. It is possible that what happened to them as children has been repressed or is being denied and this is why they cannot perceive this effect when they administer a violent punishment to a child.

3.3. THE ROAD TO CHANGE: POSITIVE CHILD RAISING AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENT PUNISHMENT

Positive child raising is an alternative to corporal, and humiliating and degrading punishments. The workshops held during the training sessions emphasised two aspects that seek to develop and implement strategies toward this kind of child raising: they propose alternatives for positive child raising that replace corporal and humiliating and degrading punishments, and they also ask the participants to make personal commitments to put these alternatives into practice with their children or the children with whom they work. This was an attempt to create momentum to change child-raising practices. As well, is it necessary to take into account that, as well as what was learned in the workshops, people have, from their childhoods, learned a series of positive and loving practices from the way they were raised. Fond memories from childhood and adolescence become the basis for growth, and changing violent punishment practices.

3.3.1. FOND CHILDHOOD MEMORIES AND THE FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE

A description of fond memories shows that these are related to the love that the parents expressed under different circumstances.

* **Family activities for recreation or social celebrations** give rise to feelings of being loved by the parents. It appears that spending time together, or special events spent with the family and the parents, is associated with fond memories.

* **Gifts** appear to be an important way that people feel that their parents express love, in particular it can have a strong impact on a child to receive a gift that he has wanted very much, or to feel that the gift is in acknowledgement of a special event.

* **Being close to the parents:** Being close to the parents at home or *at work,* or a parent's arrival at home, takes on special meaning. Feeling that presence, possibly peaceful, is remembered fondly.

* **Special celebrations for the child:** birthdays, especially the 15th, and first communion, are the special events most frequently mentioned in which they remember clearly feeling loved by their parents, who celebrated these days and made them feel special.

* **Actions that make them feel special:** Many acknowledge this when using the phrase "being spoiled." Many refer to the feeling of love that they recall about their parents at these times: "Papa would pick flowers for her on the way." (Bogota)

* **Telling the children they are loved:** The most direct and explicit way that parents express love for their children is mentioned less often than the above kinds of memories. During the session there

are few recollections of the parents telling the children that they love them. More often the memories refer to other demonstrations of love, in general terms, such as the following: ""demonstrations of love by the parents when they are home." (Bogota) When love is expressed directly, it is remembered very clearly: "The time it hailed. It was like a scene from a movie. Standing by window, with a lot of feeling, she gave me a hug and told me how much she loved me." (Bogota) The expression of love received through caresses, kisses, hugs, sitting on the father or mother's lap, are also remembered very fondly.

* **Memories associated with mealtimes:** These kind of memories are related to a feeling of being special to the parents, or the interest and care shown that, as well as being about nutrition and survival, mealtimes are an important element of child raising that strengthens the bonds of love and that often act as the glue that emotionally bonds the parents and children.

* **Playing with the parents:** Activities like playing, singing, storytelling, telling jokes, and sports, are moments of play that are recalled as a way that the parents conveyed their love.

* **Providing protection:** Although many did not have memories related to their parents' protection, the mentions that were made were highly significant to the children and as adults they recalled these in considerable detail: "I would go to my father and mother when I had a nightmare." (Bogota).

* **Talking:** In terms of talking, there are general memories like "having a good relationship with the parents, based on dialogue" (Bogota), and some that are more specific, "reflection and guidance after making a mistake." (Bogota)

As is to be expected, the *feelings associated with fond memories* are related to happiness and joy at feeling the parents' love. But as well as these, it is important to highlight the feelings of security, protection, peace, and satisfaction that are essential in developing peaceful and secure affect. Also, the feeling of being acknowledged as a person, being taken into account, or made to feel special is related to what Watzlawick (1989) and his collaborators call the "confirmation effect of communication," which has a very positive influence on development in that, throughout our constant interactions, we are looking for confirmation as human beings. Other feelings such as satisfaction, union, affection, belonging, tenderness, and pride are more often related to creating bonds of affection than to general closeness to the parents and family, and these make it possible to subsequently establish emotional ties to other people. Some also mentioned feelings of nostalgia and gratitude for the experiences of childhood.

3.3.2. ALTERNATIVES OR STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE CHILD RAISING PROPOSED DURING THE WORKSHOPS

In each of the workshops, the participants were asked to come up with proposals for alternatives to violent punishments. The groups exhibited initial resistance when they were not given concrete solutions about what they could or could not do, but rather were asked to question, invent, create, and reformulate different options for improving the education and child raising process. Little by little, alternatives were consid-

ered, developed, and consolidated. It is also important to mention that during the three first workshops the alternatives were proposed as substitutes to the punishments experienced or in use, and in the final three workshops many of these strategies were examined in more depth and upheld in conjunction with the subject of the workshop. The alternatives mentioned throughout the six workshops have been grouped into the following categories, in order of most frequent mention:

- **Alternative demonstrations of affection:** These alternatives were the most frequently mentioned throughout the workshops, demonstrating a different approach, not only of expressing love for the children but also by means of interaction less marked by power relations and more oriented toward acknowledging the child. The specific proposals were:

  * Demonstrations of love that make the child feel special.

  * Being part of the children's development process, spending more time with them and participating activities that are significant in their learning process.

  * Positive personal recognition by highlighting the child's skills, abilities, strengths, as well as appreciation for individuality, without making comparisons and respecting differences.

  * Building confidence: This was mentioned as a strategy that helps strengthen relations in which one can say what one thinks and feels with the security of not being abused or attacked: Believing what they say to us because otherwise that creates a barrier. (Workshop 6, Envigado)

  * Forgiving and asking forgiveness: This alternative reveals another change in the relations between the adults and children, making the relationship more humane and equitable by proposing that the adult admit his mistakes and ask the child for forgiveness: If one asks for forgiveness, they learn to apologise. (Workshop 2, Tenjo)

- **Communication alternatives:** Among these, the practice that received the most mention was dialogue, which sometimes was used to refer to a situation in which an adult speaks to the child without letting the child participate actively in the conversation, demonstrating that effectively he or she is not being taken into account. This situation led the training team to work with the participants to think about the significance of dialogue, seeking to bring about an awareness that not only is it necessary to change hitting for words, but also to work toward the child's active participation in the resolution of the situation. The change in conceptualisation quickly became evident with the alternatives proposed as of the third workshop.

  Knowing how to listen and take into account another person's words or opinion was addressed right from the first workshop and was proposed as an action that implies not judging, spending time so that the other feels cared for, and learning to pay attention because sometimes we hear but we are thinking about something else. (Workshop 4)

  Using dialogue to allow or encourage reflection was another alternative that was proposed as a way

that an adult and a child could analyse what had happened and find new meanings and implications for these events in personal or family life: Reflecting implies understanding that not everyone thinks or feels the same way, and that we should accept our children with their different ways of doing things, with comprehension and understanding and lots and lots of patience. (Workshop 2, Villavicencio)

Other communication alternatives were: speaking to the child at his or her physical level, using feedback to ensure that what was said was understood, taking into account what is being communicated through gestures, knowing how to talk to them, learning how to resolve conflicts, questioning, learning when not to speak when necessary. Mention was also made of the use of art (painting, crafts, dance) as a child's means of expression and communication. In workshop six, these proposals were reaffirmed and others were mentioned, such as finding the right time to communicate what one wants, always speaking in the first person as a way of taking responsibility for what is said, and keeping the message clear.

- **Alternatives for discipline or punishment:** The subject of corrective measures or punishments came up when discussing discipline, which is generally associated with the idea of a penalty or punishment. Consequently, the participants proposed alternative punishments that they felt would teach the child when they used them. It is interesting that the different suggestions did not include the possibility of coming to agreements about the consequences for actions, an aspect that was addressed in workshop five. The alternatives for corrective measures were varied.

The most commonly mentioned alternative was that of *taking away a privilege* and usually this was closely associated with *taking away something that they like a lot, rather than hitting them.* (Workshop 3) Nonetheless, the training team questioned this alternative because often the intention is to force learning by causing pain and not as a logical consequence of failing to abide by the rule. A number of participants saw and understood the problem: *If I take away what the boy likes most, then one should consider whether what is being withheld is important to his development process and he needs it to grow. For example, we did not let him go on his school trip and he only has that once a year, or we take away football or the clay modelling class and we are definitely punishing by withholding something that is important for his development. It is about looking at the constructive value of what is being taken away so that this does not interfere with his development.* (Workshop 5, Envigado)

Another alternative was to *evaluate the situation before punishing and trying to understand the situation,* which once again reveals a different perspective about the child. It furthermore implies admitting one's own mistakes and realising that, as the adult, we also get things wrong and make mistakes. (Workshop 1)

In terms of the characteristics of the corrective actions, in workshops two and three *making amends* was proposed as a fundamental element with the intention of helping the child become aware of the harm that was done. In workshop five, dedicated to the subject of non-harmful punishments, there was greater understanding of the subject, but it was also evident that coming up with an action to make amends is difficult because, culturally, we have not been taught to think that way.

Another alternative proposed is related to the *importance of explaining the consequences of the action:* For me, constant dialogue is important in which, from the time they are very little, the rules are inculcated, explaining why a decision has been made and why not, and this has worked for me. I have not had to punish but rather make them aware. (Workshop 2, Bogota)

Among the characteristics of the punishments proposed in the manual, and that were cited as alternatives prior to and during the fifth workshop, are: firmness, the relation to the fault, the possibility of allowing reflection, clarity, and that the punishment be administered in a peaceful environment.

● **Alternatives related to the rules:** From the first to the fifth workshop, the issue of *establishing rules in the home was discussed,* as a fundamental alternative in positive child raising. The rules make sense as agreements on minimum or maximum acceptable criteria (Workshop 2, Bogota) that a family needs in order to coexist, and that need to be spelled out.

Most of the comments addressed the need to set rules, with fewer mentions referring to the characteristics of good rules: that they reflect clear principles, they are age-appropriate, they are clear, flexible, explained and agreed upon, and self-explanatory. These characteristics were mentioned more often in the alternatives during the final three workshops, after having addressed the subject in the fourth workshop.

● **Alternatives referring to the adult:** In each of the workshops, the alternative was expressed that *the adult should look at him or herself, should self-evaluate, self-examine and work on his or herself* as a means of starting to change the dynamics of the relationship with the children. Factors that are part of this labour toward personal growth include: admitting when one has made mistakes, learning to listen, understanding the child's position, looking at oneself before disciplining the other, reflecting about practices, and seeking other more appropriate options. And, at the same time, working to have a more creative, coherent, consistent, and open attitude and, above all, not being domineering.

Another fundamental element that was proposed was than of the way the adult handles emotions, identifying, acknowledging, observing, not getting "caught up," and keeping a distance from feelings, while trying to better tackle the difficult situations that spark these reactions. It was proposed that the ability to handle these properly sets an example for the child of knowing how to manage emotions: *It is necessary the keep emotional balance concerning the actions that the children bounce off us. Take a break, breathe deeply, dialogue, and come to consensus.* (Workshop 2, Bogota) Emotional management is related to *tolerance and patience.*

When it is the child who is in a rage, one adult suggested providing a safe containment area as an alternative, to be able to express that emotion without hurting him or herself, or others. Also, the technique of a *time-out* can be used to cool down the emotion and reflect about what happened.

Respect was mentioned as an alternative that implies respecting the children's ideas and feelings, and not disciplining in front of others, *not humiliating any child, not making comparisons when disciplining*

(Workshop 2, Montenegro), *not hurting with comments that are not appropriate for our chil*dren. (Workshop 3, Envigado)

● **Alternatives related to understanding child development:** Although the above proposals reflect a change in the adult's *conceptualisation of children,* some participants mentioned the specific need to change that image: *It is vitally important to rethink the notion of childhood, relations with children, in order to strengthen the image of them as social subjects with rights. Merely by giving them this place in the social structure can be the start of a real battle to end mistreatment in all of its manifestations.* (Workshop 2, Soacha)

Another alternative that was identified during all of the workshops was the *need to better understand the stages of development,* in that many of the punishments were administered in response to behaviours that were natural for the child's age, and if this were known it would prevent making unreasonable demands and subsequent punishments: *One should have a lot of patience and tolerance, and understand what stage the child is going through. Sometimes we do not know about the characteristics proper to each age and we expect the children to adopt behaviours that are not age-appropriate.* (Workshop 2, Cartagena)

3.3.3.   CHANGING PUNISHMENT PRACTICES AND POSITIVE CHILD RAISING

The changes in punishment practices were investigated by means of a comparison between the initial survey and the final survey, and through sharing the personal commitments that the people voluntarily talked about in each of the workshops.

On the *aspects that the training addressed,* the participants' answers in the final survey revealed several things: one, the most common change mentioned refers to positive child raising, both in terms of consciousness about its importance, as well as concerning changing the practices. Stopping hitting and yelling is mentioned second, and at least half of the group mentions this, which is positive. This data shows that strengthening caring relations by means of expressions of affection, healthy communication, acknowledgment of the other, and the individualisation of the children, are practices that can be seen when changes are made. Ceasing to use negative practices that are based on cultural traditions and early life experiences can be difficult and, as such, they are not easy to eliminate.

Two, within the groups of participants, those who have children made more mention of the change of eliminating corporal punishment, which is consistent with what was found concerning the change in beliefs; the greatest change was also seen among the people with children under 18. This would indicate that the changes that are made to these practices have greater impact on parents than on educators, either because they made less use of these kinds of punishments from the start, or else because the affective relationship of the parents with the children is stronger and a greater motivator for change than the pedagogical relationship.

Finally, changes in thinking were the third most-mentioned factor in the answers about the influence of the training. It is possible that these changes took place, but most people considered changes to practices more important and, for this reason, they made less reference to the thinking.

On the specific results concerning the *punishments used at the beginning and the end of the training,* the initial and final surveys asked the participants about the punishments used during the past month, and provided a list of these, including corporal punishment, humiliation or degradation, withholding a treat or privilege, and making amends. It was possible to select more than one. The results show that, one, for almost all of the punishments used, including making amends, there are fewer mentions between the initial and final surveys, which could indicate that the people are reprimanding the children less because they have applied strategies that prevent arriving in a situation when the adult feels that it is necessary to punish.

Two, it is observed that making amends and dialoguing came into use from the start, followed by the withdrawal of a privilege or giving the child more work. Corporal punishments show a tendency to be used less, whereas humiliation and degradation were consistent in their frequency because yelling and indifference are commonly used, but insults, rejection, and humiliation seldom appear. It is very common that a person would use several kinds of punishments with the children, depending on the circumstances.

Three, it is observed that most of the punishments are used by people who have children under 18, and this difference is more marked in terms of yelling, slapping, and whipping, which could indicate that people think they have more of a right to use violent punishments with their own children than with children that they care for or educate in the workplace.

As well as the above, the initial and final surveys asked about *positive child raising experiences.* In terms of making rules, in general, it is observed that prior to the training the participants agreed with the need to agree on rules with the children, and giving them age-appropriate reasons for these. The final survey shows that this tendency is maintained, with slight variations. It is notable that the people with children under 18 appeared to modify the rules less in accordance with the age of their children which, as will be seen later on, results in a discrepancy between what was reported in terms of the changes that were made during the training and those they expressed when sharing their commitments.

On communication with the children and *behaviours that strengthen bonds of affection,* from the start of the training the people saw in themselves many behaviours that communicate affection to the children: they play with them or spend time with them, help them resolve problems when necessary or pay attention to them when the children sought them out, as well as praising them and looking them in the eyes. The final survey indicates high continuity of these behaviours, but slightly less than during the initial survey. This is slightly contradicted by the perception of the results recorded on achievements, in which the people reported having improved communication and bonds of affection with the children. Furthermore, as will be seen, improving bonds of affection is the participants' most-cited objective in terms of change. It could be considered that the type of behaviour evaluated on this subject does not coincide exactly with what people do, or that from the start they were already doing this to a considerable degree and they feel that at this point they have increased their expressions of affection toward the children.

Right from the first workshop, the participants were given the assignment of making and implementing one commitment related to the subject, but they were free to propose additional commitments, depending on their personal circumstances and the reflections that the workshop inspired. At the start of the second workshop, time was allotted for the participants to voluntarily share this information with the group. The comments that the people wanted to share with the group were recorded and these are the basis for the people's changes in the process and their significance.

It was observed that the commitments were related to the objectives proposed in each workshop, and in general they coincided with the alternatives that the participants proposed. The commitments varied but for effects of analysis they have been grouped into the following categories, by frequency:

1   Strengthen bonds of affection.
2   Strengthen communication.
3   Make changes in the adult's way of handling emotions.
4   Elimination of yelling and hitting.
5   Setting rules.
6   Alternatives for different ways of disciplining.
7   Work with the parents of the children in question.

It is interesting to observe that there are some similarities with the tendency analysed in the point on alternatives for change that were proposed, in that bonds of affection and communication were the most-mentioned in terms of things to change. This shows that the activities in the workshops provide guidelines so that people can apply what they have learned about these aspects to their family or work relations. Nonetheless, there are also some significant differences: in the proposed alternatives, those that refer to the adult making internal changes in terms of his emotions ranks fifth, whereas in the commitments to change it appears in third place. Possibly the people felt that this change was fundamental in order to be able to better handle punishments by eliminating yelling and hitting, and changing these for others that make amends and do not do harm. What follows is an analysis of each category in order to understand the significance of the changes that the participants made during the process and the difficulties they faced.

● **Strengthening bonds of affection:** Commitments related to building closer bonds between parents and children arose constantly during the process, whereas others like expressing affection, acknowledging the child, and admitting mistakes and asking for forgiveness, are mentioned depending on the subject of the workshop.

In terms of the *adult trying to be closer to the child,* the participants observed changes in their interactions as the result of being closer to their children: less fighting between the parents/children; greater awareness of the children's needs; giving the children more help results in better coexistence, and better grades at school.

As well, the commitments revealed that to the degree that the adults *directly expressed their love and care for the children,* a new relationship was established in which mutual concern, reasonableness by

the children, less crying, expressions of love by the children, and a sense of belonging to the family group were observed.

Acknowledging the children meant looking at them differently in order to understand them and accept them as active subjects, and not passive beings upon whom authority is imposed or who have to be guided at all times. The change in perception helped some people stop hitting and understand that the adult also has to change. *With my daughter, 12, I changed in terms of homework. The girl only listened to what her mother said. I have let her be more autonomous. She has become more independent. By changing my perception of the girl, I have stopped mistreating her. I realised that it was not the girl's problem but mine.* (Workshop 3, Bogota)

In the same way as with the above commitments, the adults make changes that show progress in terms of their *perception of themselves and of the children.* They stop seeing themselves as omnipotent beings who do not make mistakes and they *start to acknowledge their mistakes and admit them in front of their children.* The children understand that they are people and they have the right to be asked for forgiveness and to forgive. It is interesting that these kinds of commitments appear at the end of the process because at the start the adults usually consider that the children are the problem and not themselves. The adults still have some difficulty accepting this: *One does not change in a month, but one does become conscious that one should change. Admitting mistakes is not easy but I am trying.* (Workshop 3, Envigado)

● **Strengthening communication:** Improving communication implied commitments related to increasing dialogue, communication and listening; it is addressed throughout the process.

The commitments related to *dialogue* show that change really took place in the concept of this practice, which ceased to be a monologue to become interaction in which both parties contribute and are taken into account. These changes are reflected when asked about their feelings, emotions, and needs, and listening to what the children say about these and when they are given opportunities for reflection. Nonetheless, more progress is necessary because some people believe that explaining things to children is dialogue.

Listening is part of true dialogue. It is important to highlight the commitments concerning this specific practice because this is, perhaps, one of the main difficulties in relations that leads to violent punishment: not listening actively to the child means that he or she is being judged in ignorance of the situation and the child's feelings: *In my case, I had to change authoritarian dialogue. I realised that I was saying, "Shut up, don't you talk." I was not listening to his point of view. That is not dialogue. I believe that I have to listen for dialogue to truly exist.* (Workshop 3, Montenegro)

● **Internal changes in the adults:** These kinds of changes refer to handling the emotion of rage by means of self-control, attitudes of tolerance and patience, and reflection about oneself and the personal changes one needs to make. It is interesting that after workshop five, these kinds of commitments are no longer mentioned. Possibly, by this time other alternative ways of handling things have been discovered, the bonds of affection and communication have been strengthened, and the per-

ception of the child and self-perception have changed, so that there are increasingly fewer reasons for rage, in that the adult's sense of omnipotence is diminished and less outraged, or the adult feels less fear about not having control of the situation.

Self-control of rage and anger. The participants were quite specific in describing the main triggers for violent behaviour toward the children, which illustrated their progress but also their difficulties. *We have to be willing to change. During one of these sessions I thought and said to myself, 'My God, how could I hit them so hard it left a mark, just like was done to me!' I hadn't realised it. Now I am making a big effort. I believe that at least I am aware of when I am angry so as to control myself.* (Workshop 4, Bogota)

Commitments that imply *acceptance, tolerance, and patience* enable the adult to see the child as more human, recognising his individuality and validating the right to peaceful coexistence with mutual acceptance and the application of individual and collective commitments. It makes it possible for the children to develop autonomy and independence: *Applying tolerance and lowering the guard a bit, or rather, being more tolerant, gentler, listening, reasoning, and reflecting. Putting myself in the other's shoes, with my children and my husband. Being more tolerant, more open to dialogue, tolerating things about my children and my husband.* (Workshop 4, Bogota)

Another commitment that was made during the workshops was that of *self-examination and reflection,* to change attitudes toward children, correcting things that were not working and reaffirming behaviours that produce good results, from a much less omnipotent and almighty position in terms of relations with the children.

● **Stopping yelling and hitting:** In terms of the changes referring to stopping hitting or yelling, or losing one's temper, it is interesting to note that there were *more commitments made to stop yelling than to stop hitting.* This may be because the participants acknowledge more use of the former practice than the latter. As well, it is important to mention that as violent punishments are eliminated there arise new, more reflective, practices characterised by dialogue. It is also interesting to note that the children were not indifferent to the changes in the parents, and they also adopted a participative approach to this commitment: *Don't yell. All month I remembered the workshop. The workshop made me think: without yelling my children will become more responsible. My children would tell me that they had finished one homework assignment, and I would help them with another. I did not stop thinking about the workshop all month.* (Workshop 2, Bogota)

● **Setting rules:** The participants considered this important in their commitments right from the first workshop, but after workshop four more mentions of changes on the subject appeared.

For the participants, *being clear about the rules* implied a major change to their practices, which appeared to give clarity to the relations and roles for the members of the household or workplace, making coexistence more pleasant and giving rise to feelings of peace, greater commitment, and better coexistence. It is interesting to note that in the daycares there was more inclination to listen to the children and to explain more about the rules in order to clarify the parameters of coexistence in that setting.

Starting with workshop two, commitments were made concerning setting rules, taking into account the individuals, discussing the rules in order to come to agreements, distributing work fairly, and making the commitment that everyone would cooperate and participate for better coexistence. This more inclusive approach results in greater cooperation, more enjoyment of the time spent together, and improved coexistence. In terms of the rules, once again there is a shift concerning the interactions between the adults and children in that now the latter have the right to be heard and to help decide on the construction of coexistence, whereas before it was believed that only the adult imposed the rules on coexistence.

● **Use of positive alternatives for discipline:** Although in the commitments related to stopping yelling and hitting, different ways of handling the situation were mentioned, some of these specified explicitly that the idea is not to cause pain but to make amends, reflect, or discipline.

In undertaking *actions to make amends,* it was important to see the effort being made with the children. This was somewhat strange for the adults, although they began to acknowledge the importance of the objective of disciplining and teaching without hurting: *It is very difficult to work with actions to make amends because usually one punishes with what will hurt the most because that is the easiest and what one feels is most effective.* (Workshop 6, Medell n)

There are also penalties that are proposed in joint agreement with a different vision than violent punishment. Although *few adults consensually agree with the children on the penalty* when a rule is broken because, in general, it is the adults who decide and administer these, although the attempt was seen to arrive at these with the children, with positive results.

There also appeared positive disciplinary practices that do not contemplate discipline through punishments but rather through *preventive actions and ways of handling the situation other than punishing: I wonder about the strategies we should use. There must be another way of disciplining without punishing.* (Workshop 2, Montenegro) Among these positive practices, there were commitments related to allowing autonomy, providing comfort when the child cries, and setting an example.

After workshop 5, the participants exhibited some changes. Punishments gained two characteristics: *clarity and firmness.* Possibly there were also changes in other areas. In workshop 5 it was understood that once a punishment was established it was necessary to enforce it in order to avoid conflicts, and that if the punishment were clear it would help establish the discipline that was sought. *The idea is also to ensure that punishments are clear, brief, and that the children understand them.*

● **Work with the children's parents:** The participants mentioned the need for commitments related to their role as educators of parents, with the objective of influencing them to change their ways of punishing the children.

● **Commitments that did not work out:** Some of the people found that it was not possible to make the commitments work. This appeared to be related to factors such as their perception of chil-

dren and degree of self-control. In terms of their perception of children, they feel that they are rebellious, foolhardy, aggressive, forgetful, or that hitting is the only thing that works with them, indicating problems with changing a negative image for one that is more realistic, and possibly reinforcing existing power dynamics rather than strengthening cooperation or bonds of affection. In terms of self-control issues, it seems that stress or simply the habit of resolving problems by yelling prevents the commitment from being fulfilled.

3.4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE MODEL FOR TRAINING EDUCATORS

This section analyses the methodological aspects of the training process for the workshops that the educators are supposed to repeat with their peers. The analysis looks at two aspects: the process of how the educators are taught and learn, in terms of the workshop methodology, and an evaluation of the methodology used in the training process, as well as the achievements perceived as having been accomplished in the task of replicating the workshops, and how these two aspects relate to the process that was used.

3.4.2. METHODOLOGY TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

The first thing that must be understood is the sequence of activities followed in the training methodology. As such, the activities carried out in each of the sessions are described:[6]

Session 1: To think about the methodological principles of the workshops, as experienced as participants in the first workshop from the manual, the participants were asked to analyse the methodological principles and the stance assumed by the workshop facilitator that they perceived during the experience.

Session 2: The participants were asked to read workshop one and workshop two in the manual (which they had already experienced) to analyse them and propose what difficulties and advantages they would have while replicating the workshop.

Session 3: Based on the difficulties proposed in the prior session, role-playing was done on how these situations could arise and how the workshop facilitator would handle the situation. The proposals were then analysed and new alternatives for group management were created.

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[6] In this section, we refer to each of the training days as sessions in which, as well as the workshops from the manual, training was done on the use of the methodology. As such, the term workshops will be used to refer to the workshops from the manual.

Session 4: Work was done on the way that the families are invited to participate in the workshops, analysing the strengths and weaknesses. The participants were given guidance on how to replicate the first workshop in the manual.

Session 5 and session 6: Experiences were shared about how things went while replicating the workshops, and the strengths and difficulties experienced were analysed. Based on this, intervention alternatives were proposed for addressing the difficulties.

Taking into account all of the above, the following is the systematisation of the process that the participants followed.

● **Identification of the methodological principles in the workshops from the manual:**
After having participated in workshop one from the manual, the participants clearly identified the objectives of the workshop, identifying four levels of achievement with the following objectives: raising awareness, reflection, learning, and changing practices, which is in accordance with what the methodological model in the manual proposes.

On the subject of the methodological approach of the workshop, what was proposed in the manual was also perceived correctly. The three most-often mentioned characteristics refer to the *participative methodology based on the participants' experiences.* Also relevant is the aspect concerning the participants' appreciative approach, as seen in comments about the importance of respecting what others say, not judging anyone, listening to what the participants say, and freedom of expression. Another aspect that was mentioned was the *confidentiality of the information that is shared with the group. To a lesser degree it was noted that these are active workshops and the methodology is constructive.*

On the characteristics of a workshop facilitator, the model facilitator that they saw seems to have helped them to understand clearly that the facilitator must be warm, skilful (clear, organised, knowledgeable about the subject, expresses him or herself well), dynamic, respectful, and neither judgment of the participants' ideas, nor imposing solutions on them. That the workshop facilitator must believe in the participants' ability to change was not considered necessary.

In general terms, it may be said that the methodology of doing an analysis of workshop one from the manual after having experienced it as a participant, appears to be an appropriate strategy for raising awareness about the methodology that the workshop facilitator should use with the parents.

● **Analysis of the advantages perceived as workshop facilitators:**
Based on the experience of having participated in workshop one and workshop two from the manual, and having read the manual's guide about how to run the workshops, the participants identified some advantages they possess for replicating the workshops. In particular, these advantages are related to the training model (the training, the manual, and the approach to training parents) as well as some personal traits that help them be good workshop facilitators.

In terms of themselves, they feel that they are sufficiently well trained to be able to handle the subject and give the workshops, and that they know the parents with whom they would be working.

Most of the advantages referred to the model itself: they feel that the workshops are feasible, practical, simple, flexible, clear, relevant to everyday life; that the manual provides them with tools for hosting the workshops; that the active-passive, reflective-experiential methodology makes them easier to use; and that there is no need for complicated materials. A few people mentioned the advantage of having experienced the workshop as a participant before giving it as a facilitator.

No advantages related to the parents were mentioned.

● **Analysis of the difficulties expected:**
The difficulties initially proposed were classed in four groups:

∗ **Shortcomings identified in themselves** referred to their ability to facilitate the workshop, in particular how to answer questions to which they do not know the answers. They felt that they need much more training in order to be able to adequately facilitate the workshops, and they expressed fear about being able to replicate them. Another difficulty was related to handling difficult situations that could arise in the workshops with the parents. Among these, the most mentioned apprehension was encountering parents who have intense emotional reactions, and mention was also made of people who dominate the discussions, aggressive reactions, confrontations between participants, and people who do not speak up.

∗ **Difficulties referring to the parents** referred to a lack of motivation, poor attendance at these kinds of activities, the pressure that parents exercise to get the activity over with quickly, radical stances at the start, and a lack of sincerity or resistance to change.

∗ **Logistical difficulties** referred to securing a place and time to host the workshop, in that some locations are not very conducive to group work and little time may be available. They felt that adequate time is needed to plan, and to invite the parents.

∗ Finally, a few people felt that they *lack the tools to be able to refer people for professional help when necessary.*

● **Working to resolve the difficulties analysed:**
In session 3, work was done concerning the difficulties mentioned during the previous session, putting the participants into groups to analyse the difficulties and propose solutions, which they then presented as role-playing.

One of the difficulties most often mentioned in the groups was related to the emotional response that people might have to the workshops (particularly to workshop one), the aggressiveness that some people might display, difficulties getting people to participate or, to the contrary, people who dominate the discussions and like to show off what they know, and do not let others talk.

The alternative solutions suggested were generally based on the methodological principles proposed for the workshops, which had already been analysed in the first session. The following are worth mentioning:

¥ Use of the rules of respect.
¥ Group resources.
¥ Support the participants.
¥ Positive response to the participants' comments.
¥ Working in groups.
¥ Allowing people to express their feelings.

Other kinds of resources were also frequently mentioned, which had not been analysed in the previous session, nor in the methodological principles of the workshops in the manual. These were:

¥ The facilitator's personal resources: This refers to the facilitator's ability to remain in control when faced with aggression, dispute, or challenged.
¥ The facilitator's techniques: These resources, possibly learned by observing the training team, refer to skills that the facilitator can employ such as using simple language, being friendly and creating an atmosphere of trust in the group, speaking from personal experience, being clear, and body language.
¥ Workshop resources: These are practical tools that the participants consider will help them to better manage the workshop.

The relevance of using these strategies is analysed below:

✳ *To deal with an emotional response,* the suggestion is to allow the feelings to be expressed freely, providing support to the person, calling upon the facilitator's inner resources to not allow oneself to be overcome by emotion, respect for the person's situation, and seeking support from one's fellow facilitator (use of the workshop resources).

To handle aggressiveness, the first approach makes use of the facilitator's personal resources, *calm the person, do not get involved in a fight, be respectful, understand that this is not a personal reaction to you. If, as the facilitator, you lose your temper, admit this to the group.* (Tenjo)

There are also technical resources that the facilitator can use, such as giving precise answers, having control over the group, or "siding with someone who could ally with the facilitator." (Bogota) Mention was also made of using the rules for respect, such as not trying to convince others, not demeaning, and inviting the person to listen.

To a lesser extent mention was made, and it is worthwhile highlighting the use of positive comments and finding support in group resources, because of the relevance to these cases: *You are not going to convince anyone. Whatever they say, acknowledge it as important and continue the workshop from there. Work with questions.* (Bogota)

✳ Four strategies were proposed for dealing with *people who are reluctant to participate:* the workshop resources, working in groups, the facilitator's technical resources, and the rules of respect. Working in groups was emphasised: "Try working in small groups, with the chance to be with people that you know and trust." (Bogota) Also, the rules of respect include respecting some-

one's silence, anonymity for recounting experiences, and fomenting a respectful attitude toward what people say.

✳ For *people who dominate the discussion* or show off what they know, the rules of respect are suggested, often in conjunction with the strategy to comment positively on the participants' statements: "You can use lines like, getting back to what the man just said " (Bogota)

The group resources that are proposed for this situation are related to encouraging participation from other people, whereas the workshop resources are related to assigned certain functions to these people, time management, and taking turns.

✳ What to do when you do *not know how to answer the participants*' questions is handled with the facilitator's personal resources and the group resources, as follows: "You tell the person, I don't know everything. I had never asked myself that question and I don't know how to answer it, but we can think about it. As the facilitator, share your experiences and make it clear that there is no absolute truth." (Montenegro)

✳ In situations where some people in the group *have trouble facing a problem or resist,* the best approach is to adopt a respectful attitude and not try to convince them, and rather make use of methodological strategies that promote reflection.

✳ When faced with people who take *radical stances,* although this was seldom mentioned, the strategies proposed for handling this situation are adequate: respect, personal fortitude to not become caught up in the discussion, and the use of strategic techniques like *always speaking in the plural and including oneself as part of the group.* (Bogota)

✳ For *feelings of insecurity and fears* about giving the workshop, the suggestion is to handle these through a combination prior preparation on the workshop subject and using technical resources, such as: *Looking everywhere and not at anyone in particular or looking at a fixed point.* Do workshops with a maximum of 25 people, and always have two facilitators. (Bogota)

✳ *Non-attendance* was not mentioned often. Nonetheless, in session 4 work was done on how to convene the workshops, with proposals that the participants had prepared beforehand, because it was felt that the way that the parents are invited to the workshop would contribute to motivate them to attend. These results of this work were invitations that were generally very attractive because they used images of children, pleasant designs, and texts that caught the parents' attention. They were friendly invitations that avoided looking like a classic information bulletin. To the contrary, they sought to encourage the families' attendance.

After the exercise of sharing different kinds of invitations, a lesson was imparted about the importance of stressing the positive in the invitation, and not referring to punishment or mistreatment. The participants' creativity was acknowledged and the use of different crossover strategies was reinforced as a way of improving the invitation.

● **Analysis of the Experience of Replicating the Workshops**

In general, the experience of replicating the workshops was perceived in a positive light by those who facilitated. In Bogota difficulties arose related to external circumstances deriving from an institutional situation, in that several of the centres where the training took place did not replicate the workshops.

It may be said that the participants viewed the experience positively because in the report of how they carried out the workshops with the parents, they refer to more achievements and successes than difficulties. As such, here we shall examine the successes, and then look at the difficulties.

The main successes and achievements that the educators reported are related to:

✳ **The motivation and satisfaction of the parents:** The great majority of the educators reported that the parents were interested and engaged. Their motivation appears to have been the result of the methodology used, which is not one to which they were accustomed. As such, rather than rushing to get it over, they participated actively, let go of their initial shyness, and proposed more workshops. It was also felt that the work done would help them in their daily child raising, which motivated them to attend the following workshops. The educators who hosted the second workshop confirmed that the parents' motivation was sustained or increased.

✳ **Following the methodological principles from the manual:** The way that the educators recount their experiences reveals that the methodological principles were followed in the workshops:

■ PARTICIPATION: *One father said, "I have done all that I can to dialogue but that does not do any good, and so I punish" I met a neighbour in the group, and I asked her if she had asked the child why he does what he does. They helped each other. There was discussion between them. We were just the mediators.* (Soacha)

■ REFLECTION: *Use was made of reflection.* (Bogota)

■ CONSTRUCTION: *It was constructive. It makes you think and look at yourself to see what is right and what is wrong, what should be changed.* (Bogota)

■ RESPECT FOR THE PARTICIPANTS: *If a person does not want to talk, that was respected.* (Bogota)

■ BASED ON EXPERIENCE: *Everyone talked and recounted their experiences.* (Montenegro)

■ APPRECIATION: *Forty-five cases of mistreatment were identified. There were 11 parents and one guardian. It was made clear to them that this should not be taken as a reprimand, and they should be proud of their progress.* (Montenegro)

■ CONFIDENTIALITY: *Confidentiality was emphasised.* (Montenegro)

* **Strengthening people to be educators of parents:** At first, some of the educators were afraid to take on the challenge of hosting the workshops. Nonetheless, when they faced the situation, they were satisfied that they had been competent and able to do the job well: *I realised that I could do workshops with the parents, which used to frighten me.* (Villavicencio)

* **Using the manual:** Many groups mentioned the manual as being a big help. Their words express this clearly: *We had never had anything as clear as the module. It gave us a huge leg up. It was easy as pie.* (Cartagena)

* **Use of positive variations that do not alter the essential focus of the workshop:** Several groups of educators introduced motivating variations to start or end the workshops, which contributed more dynamism and captivated the parents' interest. In only a few cases was it observed that alternations were made to the essence of the sequence, the content, or the workshop's methodological focus.

* **Handling emotional situations with the parents:** Although prior to replicating the workshops the main concern was about how the parents might react emotionally to workshop one, not many of the educators reported that this was the case. Of those who did report this, most felt that they were able to handle it and they used different resources, some of which had been proposed in the training sessions: respect, support, moving toward reparation and healing, showing appreciation for the courage to recount the experience, and remitting the case to the appropriate professional.

* **Changes in the parents' practices from one workshop to another:** Of the educators who reported having facilitated the second workshop, several saw changes in the parents who attended the two workshops, which is an achievement because this means that positive changes in child raising were put into practice quickly.

* **It enabled them to appreciate the families from another perspective:** Based on the comments by some educators from Bogota, Medell n, and Quind o, it was noted that having facilitated the workshops gave them a more open-minded and less judgemental view of the families, a achievement that was not foreseen in the training model: We realised that as teachers we tend to label. We discovered harsh forms of mistreatment that were mentioned . That made us see things differently. (Bogota)

Relatively few groups reported *difficulties in hosting the workshops,* and most of the problems were addressed appropriately, as follows:

* **The educators' insecurities and fears:** Two kinds of insecurities were observed: the first, the most common problem, but that only appeared in Bogota, was the refusal to facilitate the workshops, because of not feeling confident enough to do so. The second was expressed by a few people who gave the workshops but were nervous and felt that they got some of the things wrong.

✳ **Poor attendance:** Most of the groups that cited this difficulty were from Bogota, and they noted that the period in which the workshops were scheduled coincided many other commitments. In other places there were circumstances like rain, attempting to work with families in which there was mistreatment, or simply that people did not show up.

✳ **Parents' resistance to change:** In Bogota, Medell n, and Quind o Department, some of the facilitators found that the parents adopted a stance of refusal to change. Nonetheless, the degree of resistance was varied, as was the way the educators approached the subject and their views.

■ There were few cases of strong resistance by the parents, as one group noted: *Some parents were not interested, 10 were committed.* (Medell n)

■ Most referred to the natural resistance in a culture where violent punishment is accepted. In almost all of the situations, the educators showed the parents understanding and respect, which indicates good use of the workshop's methodological approach.

■ In other situations, the reluctance was partly overcome, which was an important step in the process: *It went well because we were able to do it, but the parents give a lot of justification about why they have to hit. It was hard for them to admit the reality. It was hard for the community to trust. It was very difficult, but the parents were able to acknowledge how hard it was for them, and why it was so painful, and what they were teaching their children. The parents did not stop hitting but they began to have doubts.* (Quimbaya)

✳ **Handling the parents' emotionally reactions:** Although most of the educators reported being able to handle these critical emotional situations, in Bogota some of the educators perceived this as a difficulty, although several of them handled the situations adequately: *The same thing happened to the parents as happened to us. They didn't like being made to remember the past, and some of them got clammed up, were bothered, went silent, and others talked about their childhood, and you feel like you can't help them because there is not enough time to tell them that the same thing happened to you, for example. Sometimes the situation of the parents is not conducive for reaping the full benefits of the workshop.* (Bogota)

✳ Educators' workloads prevented them from giving the workshops: This difficulty only arose in Bogota, where some educators said that they had so much work to do every day that they did not have time to plan and give the workshops.

● ## Educators' Self-Perceived Results

In the final survey, the educators answered two questions about what they had learned as workshop facilitators, and about their confidence and willingness to give the workshops. More than half felt they had made progress in their ability to orient parents, and this led them to think that they could lead the workshops confidently and without the need for help or accompaniment from another person. This view was more commonly expressed by people who did not have children under 18. Nonetheless, it is very important to highlight that a third of the educators from both groups said that

they would prefer to give the workshops in tandem with another person, which does not necessarily indicate insecurity but rather reflects the model presented and comes from the experience of having seen the advantages of giving the workshop in tandem, as some of the previously mentioned comments indicate.

3.4.3.   EDUCATORS' EVALUATION OF THE METHODOLOGY

During the last training session, time was set aside for the people to express their opinions about the methodology. The educators mentioned quite a few advantages of the methodology, although they also mentioned some negative aspects and made recommendations.

The most-mentioned aspects of the methodology were directly related to the methodological approach: based on experience, constructiveness, participation, reflection, and appreciation. This shows that the educators found that experiencing the training by using the methodological approach was a positive aspect in the process. The fact that this approach was appreciated makes it more likely that the person will use the same approach when giving the workshop.

There were very few negative comments about the methodology. Some people said that more interactive dynamics were needed or role-playing, otherwise the process was at risk of being more rational than experiential. The suggestion was made to use role-playing, like in workshops four and six. Another person said that the cycle of six workshops was too long for working with parents, and suggested grouping the units. One person referred to the concern that the participants had been worried about: that the parents might have strong emotional reactions. It was suggested that a psychologist or psychiatrist might assist with the more delicate cases. ▮

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. CONCLUSIONS

FROM THE SYSTEMATISATION of this experience of training multipliers to work with parents on positive child raising and stopping corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments, conclusions may be drawn in three main areas: 1) the participants' experience of corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments; 2) the model for parent training, and its impact on the changes that they make; and 3) the model for training multipliers to work with parents.

4.1.1. CHILDREN'S PUNISHMENTS: THE PARTICIPANTS' BELIEFS, EXPERIENCES, AND PRACTICES

Understanding the reality of punishment means going beyond describing the participants' present day experiences and practices in order to address the meaning and significant assigned to these acts, through explicit beliefs, and the discussion of the ideas, feelings, motivations, and objectives that are tied in with the punishment situations that the participants described.

● In the first place, it is clear that the *punishment of children,* as something learned through primary socialisation experiences, *appears to remain in people's lives as a culturally acceptable practice.* This is upheld in the systematised information from this experience, as well as corroborated in research such as Belsky Egeland (1987), Straus (1980) cited by Chen and Kaplan (2001); and Cisalva (2004). *The children of yesteryear, punished by being hit, yelled at, and humiliated, repeat punishments of a similar style* but they appear to make modifications to these, in that the punishments of their childhoods, when hitting with a belt or other object was common, have changed and now, as adults, they acknowledge that they use yelling. There also fre-

quently appears, and parallel to violent punishment, strategies of dialogue and explanation to modify children's behaviour. Several hypotheses have been proposed concerning this shift: one, the fact of participating in a programme aimed at stopping violent punishment makes it more difficult to publicly admit that one hits or hits with objects; two, it may be that nowadays the media and social pressure also act to get people to moderate their aggressive behaviour toward children, encouraging them to use words, or else these create greater social barriers that prevent the people from admitting that they hit to discipline and idealise the weight of the word, thus they monologue and throw tantrums.

● The influence of socialisation is also seen in the beliefs that are used to justify violent punishment practices: *the people believe that these are normal and natural,* perhaps because it is the only way that is known, or it was the means most often used in the family of origin, which leads some people to think that this is *the only way to discipline children.* From their childhood experiences, the feelings of rejection, pain, rage, fear, and guilt are forgotten, giving rise to the *rationalisation that the pain is forgotten and only the lesson learned through punishment remains, as well as gratitude for becoming an upright person.* At the heart of this lies the belief, not always explicit but constantly reiterated tacitly, that change is brought about through pain. This opinion is very close to the etymological meaning of punishment, coming from the Latin poena meaning punishment/pain, and the added factor of atonement in search of purity, hence rectitude and good behaviour. Perhaps this is why the belief also persists that the children deserve and need to be punished as if they deliberately sought to be punished to be freed of their guilt and purified.

● Early life experiences are also the root for the conception of childhood and the way to interact with children in a *power and control relation* in which the children are not fully acknowledged as subjects. The relation is unbalanced because it assigns the role of the guilty party to the child whose behaviour is bad and must be punished. It is observed that the *adults' main reasons for punishing are based on the children's behaviours:* disobedience, making mistakes (although this is characteristic of normal child development), doing poorly at school, and behaviours that hurt others. In contrast, the adult has little awareness that the adult ego finds the child's behaviour irksome and these feelings are those that lead to the urge to punish. It is as if certain expectations existed about how children should behave, and when these are not met a punishment is warranted, without first taking time to understand what is going on. The adult, possibly repeating the behaviour of other adults, observed in childhood, claims to be in the right and administers the punishment, sometimes more violently than others. As such, children are often punished for childish behaviours like making mischief, not doing things like an adult but rather like a child, not eating properly, or making a mistake. It is like disregarding human foibles or, even more to the point, disregarding the proper stages of child development.

● From a perspective of the objective behind administering punishments, a discrepancy is observed between the rational justification and the implicit reasons behind the adult punisher's behaviour: *the adult claims to want reflection but really wants to control the child's behaviour,* without which the adult feels unsure of himself and about what could happen in the child's life. The desirable outcome of reflection is cited both in relation to violent punishments as well as others such as withholding a priv-

ilege and in terms of discipline related to talking to the child and explaining that what he did was not right. The fact that such different modes of disciplining are used to the same end suggests that rationally the adult wants the child to think and understand, but that the adults themselves do not think about whether the means really helps them to achieve this objective. There appears to be a lack of awareness that punishments that cause pain bring with them other responses that inhibit reflection because they give rise to more intense feelings like fear, sadness, rage, and feelings of rejection. The adults experienced these feelings as children and they know that the children feel this way when they are punished but the tendency to exercise discipline through control seems to have more weight in the adult's intentions. The exercise of power and control appears to be more important than the feelings that this could cause in the child.

● On the characteristics of children who are subjected to disciplinary measures (violent or non-violent), it was noted among the families that some approaches are used more with boys than with girls, and vice versa. For example, girls were spanked and boys were hit with a belt; girls were not allowed to go out and boys were not allowed to play; girls were given more housework and boys were not allowed to see their friends. The most interesting observation that came from the participants' comments was that in the schools *boys were disciplined more than girls.* Furthermore, it must be added that after the training the participants said that in their families the boys are disciplined more than the girls, and most of the participants in the project were women. This suggests some premises that would be worthwhile pursuing in subsequent research: One, that boys are more active than girls and this gives rise to more disciplining because they do not conform to expectations of good behaviour. Two, it could be that adult women expect boy children to behave more like them and when this does not take place they administer discipline. In either case, it is important to examine the image of the adult women's control over the boys and what is expected of them, as well as the need to punish or change a behaviour that could be part of normal child development.

● From all of the above, it is possible to draw a preliminary general conclusion about the reality of punishment: it is administered because the adults consider that they have the duty and the right, and they do so in the context of an unequal relationship in which they are in a position of power and control and with the concept that the children need to be controlled, disregarding that children are full subjects, actively developing, with the right to make mistakes, and to develop without having demands placed on them that exceed their abilities at the different stages of their development. The adult's inability to exert control unleashes feelings of impotence, insecurity, and rage that lead them to exercise control through violent punishment.

4.1.2. TRAINING MODEL FOR PARENTS: IMPACT ON CHANGES TO CORPORAL, AND HUMILIATING AND DEGRADING PUNISHMENTS

● The first thing that is highlighted is that, in general, the participants *changed their beliefs and practices concerning corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments and the ones who made the most changes were those with children under 18.* Possibly the fact of having children that one is still

raising and educating, and with whom vital bonds of affection exist, influences the desire to change. In this sense, it was confirmed that the design of the workshops in the manual is effective for working with parents because the principles that substantiate the work are aimed precisely at making change possible by calling on affection and reflection in order to build alternatives for change.

The fact that the educators who have children over 18 and those without children made fewer changes, provides clues to understanding that work with children's educators must be approach differently. The institutional educator employs humiliating and degrading punishments but uses less corporal punishment because the latter is less accepted in this milieu than within the family context. As such, perhaps the educator does not consider punishment as a personal problem that needs to be changed, but rather as something that takes place exclusively within the family. By feeling that this is not a problem at affects him or her personally, it is possible that the educator makes fewer changes. Consequently, it is necessary to design actions that have a more direct connection to the educator's work experience and the personal commitment that this implies, using the same methodological principles from the manual for working with parents.

● *The changes* that the participants mentioned *refer, firstly, to strengthening the bonds of affection and dialogue with the children and, secondly, to the elimination or reduction of violent punishment practices.* This is very interesting because it indicates that love and communication come first, and perhaps the easiest approach is to build up or reinforce family life, and then use this as the basis to increase the likelihood of reducing violent punishment. To the degree that the adults have a better relationship with the children, and are able to communicate with them in a more equitable way, then they may begin to modify the kind of interaction that had existed, thereby reducing the need to use punishments as the exercise of power and control.

● The above reflects a *fundamental change* that may be seen in these people: they are *thinking about children differently.* The children are no longer just people who do things wrong, who do not obey, who are at risk of getting involved in substance abuse or falling in with a bad crowd. Now, in the eyes of the adults who participated in the training, children are acknowledged as people who are able to change, to opine, to grow. This means that rather than being the objects of control who must "shape up" through discipline that is often violent, they are seen as active subjects, people who think and can make decisions about their experiences; people who can contribute to setting the rules for coexistence; people who can make mistakes; people who deserve love more than pain; people with whom dialogue, rather than monologue, is possible. *Consequently interaction becomes more equitable and symmetrical,* which also reduces situations of tension that lead to punishment, and helps to build strong and closer bonds of affection.

Changes also take place in the way that the adult sees him or herself: Progress is observed in terms of reflection on the role as educator and guide in child raising, which before was perceived as omnipotent and now is seen as more *humble and human,* able to ask forgiveness, to admit making mistakes and, above all, with an attitude of greater awareness about personal responsibility for the use of violent punishments, which enables the person to be open to self-examination as a necessary first step toward changing a situation.

In terms of the changes in the attitude toward children, adults, and their interactions, it is important to indicate the importance of *working with a child rights perspective,* with the intention of bringing about changes to positive child raising and punishment practices. As well as changing these practices *an unforeseen but fundamental corollary effect* was noted: there was a shift from considering the child as the object of education (in the sense of guiding and controlling to instil direction) to a *perspective of considering children as subjects with rights,* meaning as people who are active in the construction of their own development, who are progressing steadily toward greater autonomy and, as such, have the right to be recognised as people, with valid feelings, ideas, and opinions in social interactions. This would indicate that *work on child rights could be addressed within projects like this one* in that understanding and recognition can be achieved through this approach, in terms of behaviours and concrete actions that people understand.

● From the perspective of the training model that was used, the factors that contributed to bringing about change include:

✳ The opportunity *to reflect* enabled people to stop and think about themselves, about their situation, about their responsibility in punishment situations. In addition is the fact that this reflection comes in conjunction with *greater consciousness about different experiences* lived as a child or as an adult, and the feelings involved. This is a process of reflecting about life from personal experience and addressing fundamental aspects like feelings and family relations.

✳ Reflection is also possible because it is brought about in an *atmosphere of trust* and openness in which ideas or arguments are not imposed, but rather the people are invited to pursue a process appropriate to their personal and social circumstances. No one is judged for their actions, no one is asked to account for how they changed, no one's opinion is criticised. Respect for everyone allows the person the freedom to pursue his or her own personal process.

✳ The *constructive approach* is very important for change: it was observed that to the degree that the groups proposed alternatives, change became more of an option. This confirms the hypothesis that *people want to stop behaving violently toward their children but they do not know how. To the degree that they learn how, they progress in their transformation,* both in their personal process of reflection and self-control as well as in changing their behaviour with their children and, as such, the kind of interactions and patterns that are enacted.

✳ *The group with which one shares* the learning experience plays an important role in reflection and changing practices: sharing experiences, hearing different opinions, understanding others' situations and feeling that one has gone through the same thing and, finally, building alternatives and making commitments, allows the people to progress. In this structure, *participation* plays a fundamental role given that it allows ideas, feelings, and experiences to be compared and contrasted, which facilitates the *social construction of knowledge* that, in this case, also provides the impetus to turn this into a practice.

4.1.3. TRAINING MODEL FOR MULTIPLIERS WHO WORK WITH PARENTS

The educators underwent a constructive process in which they discussed their strengths and weaknesses in terms of giving workshops; they prepared to resolve the difficulties; and they were able to replicate the workshops quite competently, which gave them a feeling of achievement and confidence. From this process, it may be concluded that:

● The sequence that was followed appears to be appropriate: one, it offers familiarisation with the model by means of participating in its application, with subsequent analysis; two, it prepares the people to resolve difficulties by using role playing and discussion; and three, they have the manual to use as a guide to giving the workshop. As such, the difficulties that were identified at the start and that later were addressed in order to prepare to deal with them during the workshops, were not often reported by the educators when they began to give the workshops. It is possible that the difficulties that they foresaw could refer to prior experiences of working with parents, using conference-style methodologies, which do not allow the listeners to participate actively. Some of the parents who were in the replicated workshops expressed astonishment at the change in methodology and the lack of "scolding." Perhaps earlier experiences of this sort had led to fears of possible aggressive reactions, being unable to answer the parents' questions, being pressured to get it over, or a lack of attendance.

During the preparations to deal with these imagined difficulties, the educators took an important step in using strategies that reflected the principles proposed by the model they were working with. With a doubt, being able to give the workshops as they are set out in the manual, with all of their methodological principles and the confidence of being able to do them well, had impact in the success that most of the people felt.

● The training approach that allows them to first experience the workshops then later to replicate them seems to have contributed to the educators' learning, in that while they became aware of and began to appreciate the workshop's methodological principles, they were also learning subconsciously. The model of workshop facilitators who train workshop multipliers appears to be an important factor in this aspect. Also, attending the training while knowing that they would be replicating the workshops created the need to understand the strategies that generate positive or painful feelings and that give rise to change. A positive experience in the workshop could possibly be appropriated and repeated as a workshop facilitator.

In terms of painful experiences, it would appear that the experience of being the participants in the first workshop made the educators fear that the parents would have similar reactions when they were giving the workshops, which is a natural apprehension. Fear of being unable to handle another's pain and a lack of tools for coping raised doubts about how to handle the situation. Nonetheless, being prepared to know what to do helped most of them to competently deal with this situation in a way that the parents felt supported and relieved when they expressed their sadness.

● The strategy of becoming conscious of the model's methodological principles through analysing the

experience appears to have been positive in that it avoided theorisation about an important pedagogical element, but made it possible to analyse it with respect to a hands-on experience. Reinforcing these principles in the role-playing and analysing their potential helped to clarify the need to follow the principles when replicating the workshops and to put the principle into practice at that time.

● All of the above resulted in important benefits for the educators as people, for the parents who were the beneficiaries of the multiplication and, consequently, for the children who were the project's final beneficiaries. The educators were strengthened as people who feel confident about being multipliers on a subject about which they did not feel very sure of themselves at the start. The parents benefited because they were motivated on the subject, reflected, and began to make changes. Also, there were changes in behaviour during the workshops, with their being able to relate more closely to their children's teachers, who began to understand them with more insight. The children benefited because their parents began a process of change similar to the one that the participants experienced in the training project, and they began to receive more equitable, respectful, treatment with greater opportunities for participation, allowing them to become closer to the adults and contributing to their personal growth in a atmosphere of dialogue rather than control.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

There are two kinds of recommendations concerning this project: one, those that refer to new opportunities for intervention or training on the subject of positive child raising and punishment, and, two, other research topics that derive from this project's findings.

4.2.1. OTHER OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK ON THE SUBJECT

● Design and test a model that is more clearly suited to use with educators who work with children and adolescents, and who need to stop using corporal punishment and humiliating and degrading punishments in the pedagogical relation. The model should incorporate the educators' experience from when they were students as well as in their role as teachers. It is recommended that the methodological principles from this project be used, since they showed themselves to be effective for bringing about change and reinforcing good practices.

● Complement the workshops with a workshop on child development to help the parents understand what to expect from the children at different points in their development and thus temper their demands in accordance with these abilities.

● If the training model is to be widely used in other cities, it is necessary to be careful concerning how

this is done, so as to avoid creating resistance on the part of the educators at the participating institutions. Elements external to the project can be very influential and affect the project. First motivating the people who are directly or indirectly involved, to get a feel for the atmosphere, is vitally important to ensure the project's success.

- National, regional and local levels of government must have a healthcare system that can systematically provide assistance to adults who need help and to families in which situations of severe punishment and child abuse are identified. As well as identifying personal and family situations, the workshops can lead to an increase in reports of mistreatment and the healthcare and legal system must be prepared to properly handle these situations.

4.2.1. OTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

- Perhaps the most surprising of the findings was that which referred to gender differences in punishing and disciplining. It would be worthwhile to delve deeper into these results that suggest the hypothesis that boys are punished more often than girls, not only to test whether this is true, but also to understand the context and reasons for this phenomenon. This could also shed light with findings that would be useful for intervention programmes.

- Systematic follow-up to the programme is needed to ensure its continuity. It is necessary to follow-up with the project's workshop facilitators to determine whether they are giving the subsequent workshops from the manual and how they are hosting these. Furthermore, it is important to monitor the parents who are the beneficiaries of the multiplication to find out what they think about the training and what changes they have made.

- It is important that this programme's effects and impacts may be evaluated. A baseline exists to determine the stage people are at when they enter the training programme, the process they undergo, and what they achieve. If, after one or two years, their beliefs and practices are evaluated again, it would be possible to determine the degree of impact that the training had in terms of bringing about permanent changes in people in relation to the subject of positive child raising and punishments. The impact of the multiplication model could also be evaluated by looking at the changes adopted by the workshops' beneficiary parents, and the influence on their lives and the children's development. Above all, this follow-up and evaluation process would make it possible to draw more complete conclusions about the model and its effectiveness, seeing as the results presented here, although they are significant, are but a first step. ▌